be a large fresh female *Melitaea phoebe* Schiff. We delayed our departure for another half an hour and along with a worn female *Melitaea cinxia* L. found several more of this Fritillary — mostly males and all in mint condition. Incidentally, Picardy seems out of the distribution area of *M. phoebe* according to the map in the Higgins and Riley field guide. The fact that we missed our scheduled ferry was a small price to pay for this unexpected last minute bonus.

References

Fitter, R., Fitter, A. and Blamey, M. 1974. *The Flowers of Britain and Northern Europe.* Collins.

Higgins, L. G. and Riley, N. D. 1970. *A Field Guide to the Butterflies of Britain and Europe.* Collins.

TRACHYPHLOEUS BIFOVEOLATUS BECK (COL.: CURCULIONIDAE) SWARMING UNDER A STREET LAMP; WITH A NOTE ON ITS VARIATION. — Further to my recent report (1977, *Ent. Rec.*, **89**: 340) of finding numbers of the weevil *Otiorhynchus ligneus* Ol. gathered upon a low wall under a street lamp near here one night last August, I have now to note a similar but still larger assemblage of another flightless ground weevil, namely *Trachyphloeus bifoveolatus* Beck (=*scaber* L.), under the same lamp on the night of 16th October. The night was rather misty and damp, but scarcely warm, and at a rough estimate somewhere between 50 and 70 weevils, possibly many more, must have been present. As before, the top of the wall was most frequented by them, but on this occasion the lamp standard too carried a good number, and even some metal railings to one side of it had their quota. The species is a common one in this district in suitable places on light soils, especially in heathy localities at roots of sheep's sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*) with *T. scabriculus* L. However, to encounter it in abundance in such an unlikely spot, and in such unusual circumstances, is certainly remarkable.

T. bifoveolatus exhibits a wide range of variation in the colour-tone of its clothing of scales—a fact barely mentioned in our standard works. This variation is clearly edaphic, i.e., correlated with the substrate on which the beetles live; thus, on sand or gravel they tend to be ochreous-brown, on chalk grey-white, on red sandstone brick-red, and on dark humus-rich soils, fuscous. At least on the latter type of substrate, fresh and unabraded examples—as in some other species, notably *scabriculus* L. *laticollis* Boh.—have a characteristic pattern on the elytra, which in *bifoveolatus* consists of a well-marked interstrial tessellation. The breadth of the body and degree of rounding of the elytral sides also varies considerably, but the broader forms (var. *angustisetulus* V. Hansen) seem much commoner with us than the narrower ones (nominotypical), whereas the reverse is the case in mid-Europe. — A. A. ALLEN, 49 Montcalm Road, Charlton, London, SE7 8QG.